
**Select Committee on Hood Canal
Committee**

HB 2081

Brief Description: Creating an aquatic rehabilitation zone designation as a framework for Hood Canal recovery programs.

Sponsors: Representatives Eickmeyer, McCoy, Chase, Appleton and Haigh.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishes an aquatic rehabilitation zone for watersheds draining into Hood Canal.

Hearing Date: 2/22/05

Staff: Caroleen Dineen (786-7156).

Background:

Hood Canal is a glacier-carved fjord approximately 60 miles in length with approximately 180 miles of shoreline. Portions of Hood Canal have had low dissolved oxygen concentrations for many years. The University of Washington recorded low dissolved oxygen concentrations in the 1950s. In recent years, low dissolved oxygen concentration conditions and significant fish death events have been recorded on Hood Canal. The 2004 dissolved oxygen concentrations in southern Hood Canal were the lowest recorded concentrations for the water body.

The Puget Sound Action Team (PSAT) is a state agency that develops and coordinates water quality programs in Puget Sound. The Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC) is a group of county and tribal governments established to address water quality problems and natural resource issues in the Hood Canal watershed. In May 2004 the PSAT and HCCC prepared a report - the *Preliminary Assessment and Corrective Plan*(PACA) - assessing sources of nitrogen introduced into Hood Canal. The PACA identifies six major categories of human-influenced nitrogen sources for Hood Canal and specifies recommendations for corrective actions for these categories.

Research and monitoring related to Hood Canal's low dissolved oxygen concentrations is being conducted. The Department of Ecology's marine waters monitoring program and the University of Washington's Puget Sound Regional Synthesis Model (PRISM) program involve testing at numerous Hood Canal stations. In addition, Hood Canal monitoring and research are being conducted by the United States Geological Survey and various local agencies and organizations. Further, a group of 20 federal, state, local, and tribal agencies and nonprofit organizations have

established the Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen Program (HCDOP), a three-year effort to coordinate Hood Canal monitoring, analysis, and modeling results.

Summary of Bill:

Aquatic rehabilitation zones (ARZs) may be designated by the Legislature for areas whose surrounding marine water bodies pose serious environmental or public health concerns. The first ARZ, known as ARZ one, is created for the watersheds that drain into Hood Canal south of a line projected from Tala Point in Jefferson County to Foulweather Bluff in Kitsap County.

The ARZ provisions are codified as a new chapter in Title 90 RCW. These new statutory provisions do not alter, diminish, or expand existing jurisdictional authorities in other statutes or affect application of other statutory requirements or programs not specifically referring to ARZs. If provisions in other statutes conflict with any statutory provisions governing ARZs, however, the ARZ statutes govern ARZs.

Legislative findings identify the substantial environmental, cultural, economic, recreational, and aesthetic importance of Hood Canal. Legislative findings also specify concerns regarding Hood Canal's low dissolved oxygen concentrations and identify research and monitoring efforts that are occurring with respect to this condition. Legislative findings also recognize a need for the state to take action to address Hood Canal's low dissolved oxygen concentrations. Legislative intent is specified to establish an aquatic rehabilitation zone as a statutory framework to address this condition as solutions are identified.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.